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ABSTRACT

The 1970 Census showed that we Americans are an urban people. Seven of every 10 U.S. residents live in metropolitan areas: 3 in central cities and 4 in suburban areas. The movement to the suburbs swelled to high tide in the 1950's. Although it abated somewhat in the 1960's, it reached an historic height in 1970. In April 1970 there were 203.2 million inhabitants in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Almost 70 percent (nearly 140 million) lived in the 243 SMSA's; 32 percent (about 64 million) lived in the 308 central cities; and 37 percent (nearly 76 million) lived in the suburbs. Although overall there was a small gain in population for central cities between 1960 and 1970, a great many cities actually lost population. If past trends continue, nearly half of the American people will be living in the suburban portions of our metropolitan areas by 1985. And one-third of the central city population will be black by 1985, compared with one-fifth at present. We can expect the greatest growth to be in middle-sized SMSA's, those that now have between 500,000 and two million inhabitants. The old image of suburbia as a fringe of "bedroom communities" is fading. Satellite communities, complete with most consumer--oriented facilities and services once located exclusively in the city, are springing up to serve the rapidly growing suburban population. (Author/JM)

WE THE AMERICANS

Our Cities And Suburbs

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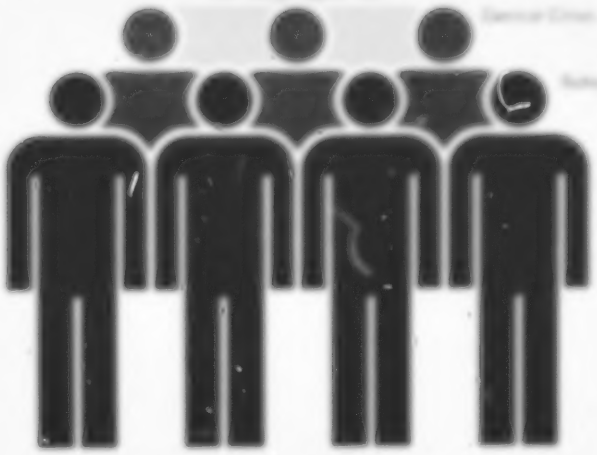
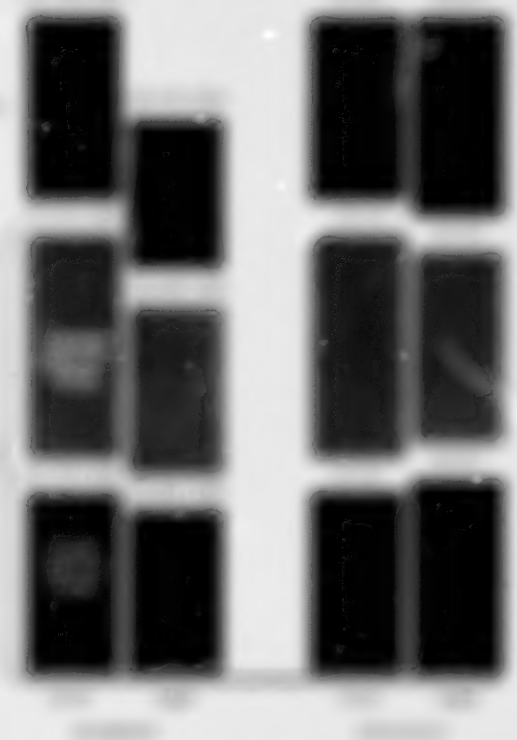


The 1970 Census Showed That We Americans Are An Urban People. Seven In Every Ten U.S. Residents Live In Metropolitan Areas: Three In Central Cities, And Four In Suburban Areas.



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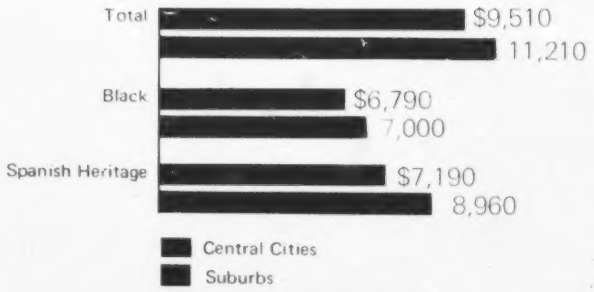
Incomes Higher In Suburbia

Over one-half (53 percent) of the Nation's 2.4 million families with incomes of $25,000 or more live in suburban areas of SMSA's. Not quite one-third (31 percent) live in central cities.

The median income for city families in 1969 was $9,510; 4.6 percent of city families had $25,000 or more income. The median income for suburban families was $11,210, and 6.5 percent of them had $25,000 or more.

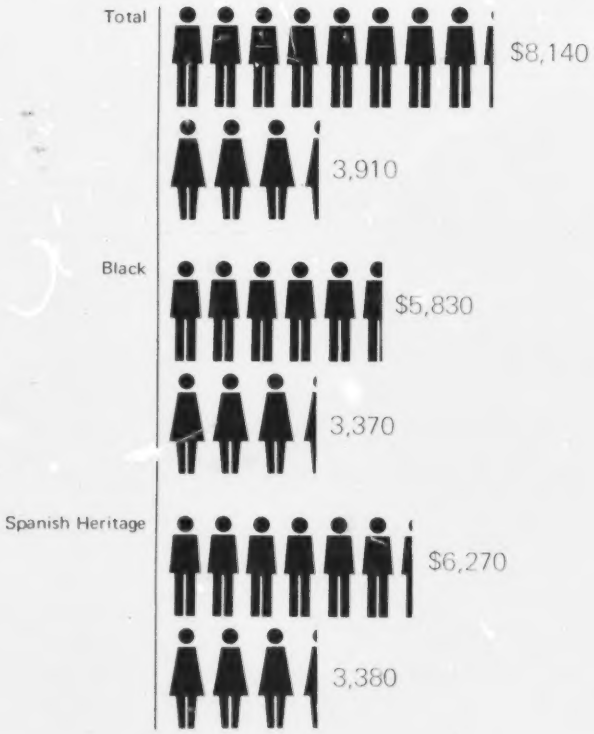
Median Income
Of Metropolitan Families



Men Earn Twice As Much As Women

Earnings—from wages and salaries or from self-employment—provide the principal source of income for most Americans, and men average much higher earnings than women. In metropolitan areas they average more than twice as much, $8,140 vs. $3,910.

Median Earnings
Of Metropolitan Workers



But Suburbia Has Its Poor, Too

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Over one-half (54 percent) of the Nation's poor families live in metropolitan areas, 32 percent live in central cities, and 22 percent in the suburbs.

The 1969 income level that separated "poor" from "nonpoor" was officially established at $4,140 for a nonfarm family of four; for a nonfarm individual living alone or with nonrelatives, it was $2,040.

The following table shows that 11 percent of central city families and 6 percent of suburban families were below the low income or poverty level in 1969.

Low-Income Families

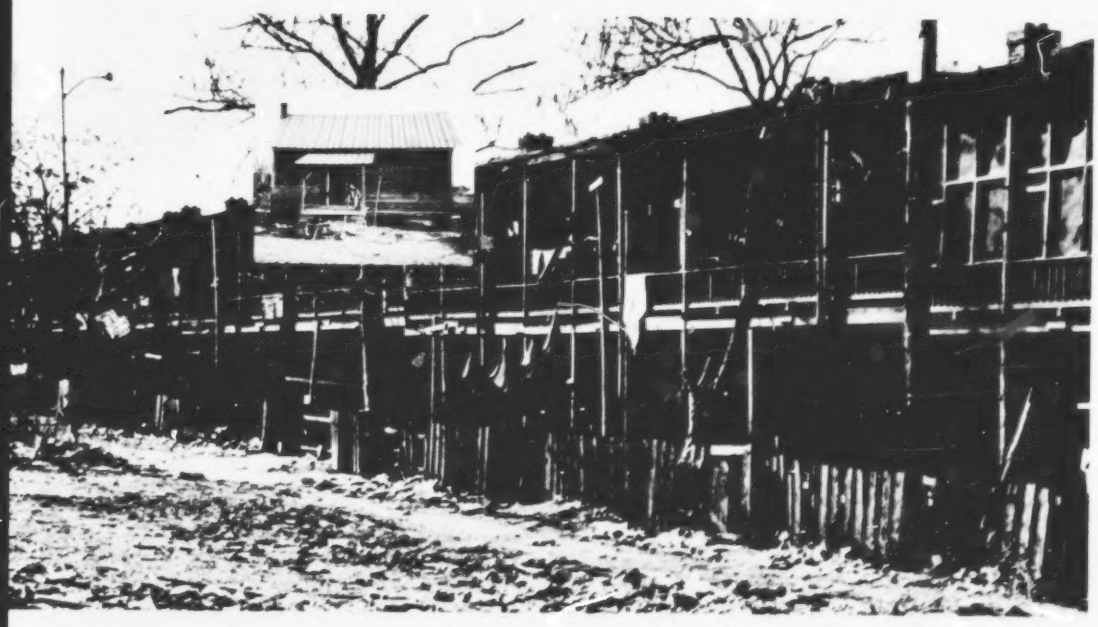
		Total	Black	Spanish Heritage
Central Cities	Number of Families	1,700,000	723,000	223,000
	Percent	11.0	24.5	21.4
Suburbs	Number of Families	1,200,000	185,000	96,000
	Percent	6.3	24.6	14.4

Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of all poor Americans living alone or with nonrelatives are in metropolitan areas; 40 percent are in central cities and 24 percent in suburban areas.

The following table shows that one-third of all persons in central cities not living with relatives and nearly one-third in the suburbs are below the poverty level.

Low-Income Individuals Not Living With Relatives

		Total	Black	Spanish Heritage
Central Cities	Individuals	2,400,000	530,000	90,100
	Percent	33.1	41.1	37.7
Suburbs	Individuals	1,400,000	122,000	40,000
	Percent	31.5	47.6	36.2



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More Households, More Housing

Metropolitan Housing Characteristics

	Central Cities	Suburbs
Units for use year-round	22,600,000	23,500,000
Built		
1960-70	18.5%	32.7%
1950-59	19.1	27.2
1940-49	14.4	12.4
1939 or before	48.1	27.7
With air conditioning	38.2	40.1
Occupied Units	21,400,000	22,500,000
Population in housing units	61,800,000	73,700,000
With clothes washing machine	60.4%	77.3%
With clothes dryer	31.2	52.5
With dishwasher	15.4	27.0
With food freezer	16.6	28.7
With TV	94.8	97.2
Two or more cars	26.2	44.7
Moved into unit 1969-70	23.2	21.1
Owner-occupied housing—median value	$16,400	$20,000
Renter-occupied housing—median rent	$90	$114

In metropolitan areas, fewer young married couples were living in a parental home in 1970 than in 1960. More young single working people were living alone, as were more elderly individuals who no longer had a husband, wife, or family to care for. As a result, the number of housing units in both central cities and suburbia increased more rapidly during the 1960's than their population.

Housing within central cities rose from 20.4 to 22.6 million units (10.5 percent), while the population in housing units rose from 58.8 to 61.8 million (5.1 percent).

Suburban housing grew from 18.2 to 23.5 million units (29.3 percent) while the population in housing units increased from 58.3 to 73.7 million (26.3 percent).

Here are some comparisons between housing in central cities and suburban areas.

Suburban Expansion—Where Will It End?

If past trends continue, nearly half of the American people will be living in the suburban portions of our metropolitan areas by by 1985. Only one-fourth will be in central cities and one-fourth in rural areas. And one-third of the central city population will be black by 1985, compared with one-fifth at present.

Also, we can expect the greatest growth to be in middle-sized SMSA's, those that now have between 500,0000 and 2 million inhabitants.

Behind this phenomenal suburban expansion and general decline of many large central cities is a combination of forces: modern technology and America's growingig affluence.

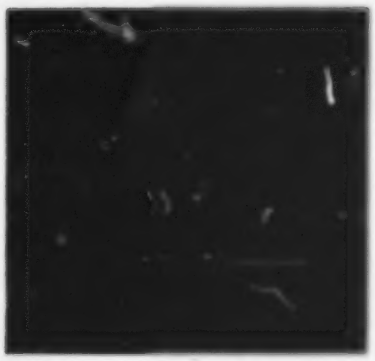
Technology developed the high-powered automobiles and built the superhighways that together minimize distances and enable metropolitanites to commute from suburb to suburb and from suburb to city with comparative ease.

America's affluence, the product of high employment and increasing family income, has put a home in suburbia and at least one car within reach of millions of families who, for whatever reason, prefer suburban to city living.

The old image of suburbia as a fringe of "bedroom communities" is fading. Satellite communities, complete with most consumer-oriented facilities and services once located exclusively in the city, are springing up to serve the rapidly growing suburban population. Shopping centers, restaurants, branch banks, medical and business offices, and the like follow, indeed often precede, housing developments in a seemingly never-ending expansion.

Where will it end?

What do you think?



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